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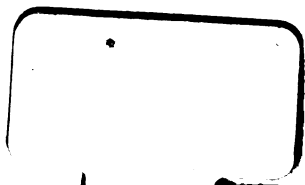
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A HUNDRED YEARS AGO



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# A HUNDRED YEARS AGO;

OR,

A NARRATIVE OF EVENTS LEADING TO THE MARRIAGE  
AND CONVERSION TO THE CATHOLIC FAITH OF

*Mr. and Mrs. Marlow Sidney,*

OF COWPER HALL, NORTHUMBERLAND.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

A FEW OTHER INCIDENTS IN THEIR LIFE.

BY THEIR GRAND-DAUGHTER.



LONDON:

R. WASHBOURNE, 18 PATERNOSTER ROW.

1877.





## P R E F A C E.

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**T**HE following short narrative of the circumstances connected with the marriage and subsequent conversion of a young couple to the Catholic Faith more than a century ago, was written only for private circulation among the members of their family and descendants, to whom the record of their happy change of religion would be both interesting and instructive; but the narrator being desirous of preserving the memory of what may be deemed a very striking and wonderful conversion, considering the time in which it



occurred, and the youth of the parties (the period being one when such an event was extremely rare in England, as compared with the present day), she, the grand-daughter, has decided on sending this little history to the press.

Every detail is taken from notes made during the lifetime of her grandparents, of conversations held with them, but chiefly from the account given her by her grandmother, who lived to a very advanced age, in the perfect possession of all her faculties, and who always delighted in talking over the scenes of her youth, and the conversion of her husband and herself to the True Faith, through God's grace, with so few visible means to bring it about.

All conversations are given, as nearly as possible, in the same words in which they were recorded, the writer having merely arranged them in a connected manner, any peculiar expressions being exactly repeated.

She always listened with great interest to her grandmother when she commenced in her usual way, with, "In the first years of our marriage," or, "Before we were Catholics."

The old lady always responded willingly to all questions relating to her early years, having a most retentive memory; and generally concluded, as the narrator now does these few preliminary observations, with, "Blessed be God for all His mercies."

She will only add her hope that the general reader will not be displeased at the trivial nature of some of the subjoined incidents, which were recorded for those who would doubtless be interested in them; and that the great difference of manners and customs in those days will be considered.

second union, devoting herself with the strongest maternal affection to the welfare and advancement in life of her only son, having also one daughter, who lived and died a Protestant, and was always much prejudiced against the religion eventually adopted by her brother.

Soon after young Sidney left home for Cambridge, Mary Mangaar, a niece of Mrs. Sidney's, came to reside with her, having lost her own mother. Her father was by birth a Danish gentleman of rank, but the marriage had been disapproved of by his wife's family. He was of a roving and unsettled disposition, and passed his time chiefly on the Continent, leaving his young daughter at a school in England, from whence, in her fifteenth year, she was removed to her aunt's house. Mary, or Polly as she was generally called, soon found favour with her. Her lively manner and affectionate disposition contrasted forcibly with the less amiable character of Mrs. Sidney's own daughter, who, though four or five years her senior, seemed to take an aversion to her young cousin. Marlow spent his first vacation with his uncle in the north of England, so that at the close of his second term he was nearly eighteen when he returned to his mother's house at Witham, in

Essex. Polly had never seen her cousin Marlow, but the praises of his fond mother impressed her with a great feeling of awe in his regard, heightened by the high encomiums on his talents and early classical attainments expressed in letters received from his professors at Cambridge. He was highly spoken of by all their friends, and his return home for his vacation was hailed with joy even by the domestics.

In fine, Mr. Marlow was a sort of idol in the establishment of which his sole will was the law and the rule. Even his sister, who had also a pretty strong will of her own, was always obliged to give way to him; on that point she dared not oppose her mother. Happily his cultivated mind and naturally good understanding preserved him from many faults which most young men would have fallen into under such unbounded indulgence.

Polly, now in her sixteenth year, had been too little brought forward to be otherwise than a child at heart, and, being so conscious of the importance of her cousin in his own circle, she thought him, to use her own words, "to be something so very clever and exalted above herself, that she quite trembled when he first

spoke to her, and the very idea of his noticing her in any way beyond the ordinary civility of a gentleman, never entered her remotest thoughts. She had even heard plans marked out for the future in the way of matrimony, and these pointed in a direction so greatly above her pretensions as a sort of half-dependent cousin, that at first she only sought to elude his observation. She felt also a bashfulness, poor girl, even in the matter of her dress, which could not come near to Miss Sidney's more elaborate toilette.

Naturally light-hearted, however, with occasionally a great flow of animal spirits, and a rather keen sense of the ridiculous, which qualities were rather sternly rebuked by that young lady, Polly was astonished one day when, after some exuberant demonstration of mirth on her part, Marlow repelled his sister's harsh remarks with these words:

"Hold your tongue, you old maid" (the old maid was scarcely twenty-one); "you are always rating Polly because she is not as demure as yourself, but she is much better as she is."

After this Polly could not be long blind to her cousin's attentions, though rarely shown in the presence of others, instinctively fearing,

perhaps, the disapprobation of his mother, who cherished, as she well knew, much higher aspirations for her gifted and fondly-loved son.

On the evening before Marlow Sidney's return to his studies at Cambridge, a party of friends being assembled in the drawing-room, somebody ventured to make an observation with reference to another gentleman, which brought the colour into Polly's cheeks. Although she had never encouraged his attentions, she disliked that her cousin Marlow should hear of them. Suddenly a crash was heard at the other side of the table.

"Oh dear, what a pity, Marlow!" said his mother; "was your tea too hot?"

In those days people were not so conventionally indifferent to such accidents—one of her beautiful porcelain cups and saucers had fallen to the ground and was broken to pieces. Similar instances had previously occurred, showing the headstrong will of the young student when anything interfered with his predilection for his cousin.

That same evening, when all had retired, Marlow remained stretched on a sofa amusing himself with kicking his heels through a valuable picture that hung on the wall opposite to him, the subject of which he disliked, and so

# A Hundred Years Ago.

the very idea of his noticing her, and beyond the ordinary civilities never entered her remote thoughts. She had even heard plans marked out in the way of matrimony pointed in a direction so greatly at variance with her own pretensions as a sort of half-dependent that at first she only sought to elude them. She felt also a bashfulness, even in the matter of her dress, which was near to Miss Sidney's more elaborate.

naturally light-hearted, however, with a great flow of animal spirits, and a keen sense of the ridiculous, which were rather sternly rebuked by that Polly was astonished one day when an exuberant demonstration of mirth on Marlow's part repelled his sister's harsh words:

"I told your tongue, you old maid" (Polly was scarcely twenty-one); "you are because she is not as delicate as I am, but she is much better as she is. Polly could not be long of her attentions, the presence of others."

"I had begun to think  
that."

"But I don't know whether I  
think something of you  
Mr. — would please you

to come here?" she repeated.  
"I am happy to hear of you

"I" said she opening her eyes  
"to do you mean?" Then  
herself she added, "Of course you  
are happy here. You know how your  
eyes are at you have a reason to be-  
lieve."

Marked accordingly, "I mean  
what is perplexing me; but while I  
don't think about Mr. —, nor be-  
lieve my sister, mind how saying any-  
thing to you in the least. I  
don't think my mother would try to influence  
your inclination in so important a  
matter. I will write to you, and you  
will come and tell me all about yourself and  
your home, won't you, Polly, dear?"  
"Yes, if your mother does not object,"  
she hesitatingly.



disfigured it as to compel its removal. Polly lingered in the room after Mrs. Sidney and her daughter had left it, occupied in assisting a servant to replace the porcelain tea-service in a recess, where it was kept with other china ornaments, according to the custom of the day. As she was retiring quietly when all was arranged, not venturing to interrupt the train of thought in which her cousin seemed indulging after exercising his feet in the destruction of the picture, he seemed suddenly aware of her intention, and said :

“ Won’t you say good-night to me, Polly ?”

“ Oh yes, Marlow,” she replied ; “ but I did not like to disturb you as you seemed tired and thinking.”

“ Yes, I am thinking,” replied Marlow ; “ but do sit down for five minutes. I am glad all those people are gone, and tell me now, do you really care for Mr. —, the man they teased you about till I managed to give the conversation a different turn ?”

“ No, Marlow, I do not care for him,” said Polly ; but with her usual light-hearted manner she burst out in a laughing tone : “ but what on earth can that be to you ?” And yet, “ minx that I was,” added the old lady when relating

this episode in her life, "I had begun to think it was something to him."

"Well, Polly," said her cousin, "whether it is anything to me or not, it is something to you; and I don't believe Mr. —— would make you happy."

"I am quite sure he could not," she rejoined.

"Could I make you happy, dear Polly, do you think?"

"You, Marlow," said she, opening her eyes very wide; "what do you mean?" Then checking herself, she added: "Of course you make us all happy here. You know how your mother grieves that you have to return to College to-morrow."

"Yes," said Marlow thoughtfully, "I must go, that is what is perplexing me; but while I am away don't think about Mr. ——, nor be persuaded by my sister, *mind*, into saying anything to compromise yourself in the least. I don't believe my mother would try to influence you against your inclination in so important a matter, and, Polly, I will write to you, and you *must* answer me and tell me all about yourself and everything at home, won't you, Polly, dear?"

"Yes, Marlow, if your mother does not object," she replied hesitatingly.

"She shall not object," said the wilful boy. "I know," he added, correcting himself, "she will not object to what I desire so earnestly. I won't detain you any longer now, Polly, except to wish you good-bye" (action suited to the words). "I could only do so in a stiff way, you know, before them to-morrow;" and with one more embrace they parted, and so ended their first love scene.

After her cousin had started for Cambridge the next morning, on returning to her room to conceal her tears, Polly found on her toilet-table a little box containing a beautiful ring, with a short note, affectionately asking her acceptance of it; also a handsome silk dress, a not unusual present in those days.

Of the latter he had given a similar one to his sister, or there would have been a hue-and-cry, as he said afterwards. The cousins found means to correspond, and Polly looked forward with much anxiety for Marlow's return at the next vacation, having meanwhile kept her secret closely within her own breast.



## CHAPTER II.

**A**FTER the conclusion of the next term, young Sidney returned to his mother's house more manly in appearance and improved on all points, and he soon broke to her the fact that he had made an offer of marriage to his cousin, Mary Mangaar. Mrs. Sidney was much grieved at hearing it, and his sister most indignant. They obtained from him at last a promise that he would wait a year, and in the meantime consider the matter and postpone their union if Polly was then undecided, as they could only influence him by urging that she was then too young to make up her mind on so important a point.

During the progress of the ensuing year after the young student had returned to his College life, great pressure was put upon Polly to give up her cousin, and accept the attentions of another gentleman who had also made her an

offer of marriage through her aunt, but nothing could shake her constancy. She was willing to wait, but declared she should never love any one but Marlow. In the correspondence of the lovers the young girl naturally alluded to these measures, and the endeavours to force her into the society of the suitor whose presence was so distasteful to her.

Marlow, therefore, fearing she might be subjected to even greater annoyance, with his usual impulsive and uncontrolled will, returned home suddenly on a short leave of absence, and declared that he would marry his cousin without further delay. Bearing down all opposition by his indomitable resolution, they were actually married within a week after his arrival in a very private manner, he having not long entered his twentieth, and the young bride being only in her seventeenth, year. Mrs. Sidney and her daughter finding their arguments could not prevail, consented to accompany them to the parish church, where the ceremony took place.

"Such a sage couple," used the old lady to say, "never before went to the altar to be united in wedlock."

The clergyman who married them, an old and intimate friend of the family, was obliged to re-

buke Miss Mangaar in an undertone during the service, for she, to use her own expression, was "giggling all the time," and so full of her tricks was she, that Marlow had to hold her hand tight while the ring was being placed on her finger.

When the ceremony was concluded and they entered the vestry with the few persons that were present, their old friend the parson said: "Polly, you little puss, you deserved to be whipped instead of married."

She then started off in a race with her new husband and some of his friends round the vicarage garden, the object being (one in those days never omitted) to obtain the bride's first saluting kiss which she withheld in that way.

Marlow however contrived to catch her first, and brought her back triumphant. The young couple started on the same day on their road to Cambridge, a short distance from which the young husband had taken a pretty cottage for their temporary abode. He desired to keep his marriage, if possible, from being known at his College, such a procedure being quite contrary to rules, and likely to eventuate in the abrupt closing of his studies. He had nearly four months of his term to run, and this he completed with all the honours he could acquire.

He had, however, sometimes to encounter the sly jeers of his fellow-Cantabs, who suspected something by his lodging at a distance, and he soon became aware that his marriage was strongly guessed at, if not absolutely known to his professors, who, he afterwards found, had made strict inquiries regarding his conduct.

Marlow Sidney was a favourite with those in power, they had also a high opinion of his moral character, and these circumstances, coupled with the fact that so short a time was required to complete his last term, caused the affair to be winked at—all the more readily as the young husband never relaxed in his attendance at his College.

“Often,” said the old lady, “used Marlow to bring two or three of his fellow-students to sup at the cottage, and they willingly accompanied him, well pleased to have a peep at ‘Sidney’s pretty little wife,’ and they all enjoyed themselves very much. These,” said she, “were very merry little parties; yet young as he then was, there could be no breach of decorum in my husband’s presence. At that time when so much licence generally prevailed in conversation, he could never endure a word that would shock the most fastidious ear, and though drinking to

excess was then almost the universal practice in all convivial meetings, I never knew Mr. Sidney to exceed the bounds of the strictest moderation. Every one said he was unlike other young men of that period, and even had he lived at the present day, when there is so much more refinement in those matters, he must have been respected by all who knew him.

"So," continued Mrs. Sidney, "these young Cantabs always behaved as gentlemen, for my husband would only of course invite such as he could trust."

The young wife found herself much at a loss for the society of any lady friends during the few months they lived in their little retired cottage in that contraband way. She was rather pleased in after-life to relate that with all her thoughtless gaiety, she was the indirect means of her own and her husband's conversion to the Catholic Faith, while the latter was still a student. She had read out of some book given to her by her old friend the clergyman who married them, that wives ought to try to lead their husbands, in a gentle way, to religious influences; and before parting with her aunt, the latter had inculcated the necessity of being steady, and giving good example, especially



in matters of religious duty, to her young husband. All this she thought to do one day by accosting him in the following manner:

"Dear Marlow, we have now been nearly three months married, and have not yet received the Sacrament. Next Sunday is Sacrament Sunday at the church of this parish. Nearly every one about here, I think, knows that we are married; therefore there can be no reason why we should not approach the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper together. What do you think?"

"Certainly, my love," was the reply, "I am most willing to do so; and let us both, as a preparation for it, read a chapter in the Testament daily during this week, especially such as have reference to its institution: we can take notes, and compare them in the evenings."

This was readily agreed to; but after three days Marlow entered the room where his wife was sitting, adjoining his own little study, saying:

"My dear Polly, I fear I cannot, as I proposed, receive the Sacrament on Sunday next; I must defer it for a short time, until I can acquire a better understanding of the text, especially that in the sixth chapter of St. John.

I will in the meantime consult Mr. ——— and Mr. ———” (high authorities at Cambridge). “I do not, however, wish to hinder your devotion, should you desire to partake of the Sacrament on next Sunday.”

“Indeed, I shall do no such thing,” replied Polly, all her good intentions vanishing at once. “What! go up to the Communion Table all alone! No, I will wait for you! but I think you ought not to search *too much* into these matters, which are mysteries of religion; but we do certainly know, dear Marlow, that it is our duty to receive the Sacrament when we can;” and the little woman considered she was giving most salutary advice to her young husband, and felt proud to find herself on the right side, as she thought, against him, when in general his decisions were to her as oracles.

“Well, then, we had both better wait a little, perhaps,” he replied; and the subject was dropped.

He soon proceeded to consult the Church of England divines he had referred to, but without success; in fact, they only seemed to mystify him still more. He could not feel satisfied with their explanations of the words of our Lord, they being of the usual kind given by what we

should now call Low Church Protestants. Finally, he called on a clerical dignity of the highest reputation for learning and piety; but neither he nor any other would, as he thought, grapple with the question, and only launched out into vague assertions and denials, mixed with warnings against dangerous doctrines, but giving no definite opinion as to the teaching of the Church of England on the subject, though of course the *Real Presence* was completely denied.

At some of young Sidney's remarks the Dean of — stopped him short in the following manner:

"Take care, my young friend; you are stumbling over dangerous ground. Such opinions as you imply would be of a decidedly Popish tendency."

But the young man astonished him by replying: "I care not, sir, of what tendency they are if they be *true*, though I have no desire to become a Papist."

"But, Mr. Sidney," continued the Dean, "such doctrines are quite anti-scriptural, giving an unnatural and forced construction to the text."

"That is just what I cannot admit, sir; *yours* appears to me to be the *forced* construction."

"Now, my good and clever young friend, let me, as a father, entreat of you to put away all such thoughts and theories from your mind, and partake of the Lord's Supper in commemoration of His death with simplicity and faith."

"Faith in what, sir? Faith implies a firm belief, does it not? but does it suppose a firm faith to believe that we receive what we see, a piece of bread? that is what I ask."

A long discussion ensued, leaving young Marlow Sidney as little satisfied as before on the subject.

Others to whom he applied told him plainly that it was not requisite that he should approach the Sacrament at all if he could not bring his mind to the scriptural interpretation of the point in question, as defined by the Church of England. To this view he was rather inclined, though he felt it was hard to understand what that definition meant; and the idea haunted him that such could never be the intention of our Lord in its institution, when he said: "Do this in commemoration of Me."



### CHAPTER III.

**W**E must now look back a little to another incident which wonderfully connected the links in the chain of circumstances leading to the conversion of the young couple. Marlow Sidney had purchased for his wife a handsome new guitar. The playing on this instrument, as the latter stated, was one of her few accomplishments. The guitar, however, required such frequent tuning (being also somewhat differently constructed from the one she had been accustomed to use) that she got tired of the trouble it gave her; and as she could not manage it herself, it was thrown aside and neglected. One evening an intimate friend of Marlow's—a professor at the College he attended—called at the cottage to see him. He noticed the neglected guitar. The obstacles to using it were discussed, and he remarked that he had frequently met with a gentleman lately who was

an excellent performer on that instrument as well as on others, and who was, in fact, a finished musician. If Mrs. Sidney would allow him to introduce this gentleman, he was sure he could soon put her guitar in order, and show her how to regulate it.

"I should be delighted, indeed," said she, "to make his acquaintance."

"I must, however, observe," added their friend, "that I have been informed—I know not with what truth—that this gentleman is a minister of the Church of Rome."

This was a very polite way of designating a Catholic Priest in those days, but the Professor was a man of rather liberal ideas, and had no very strong religious opinions of any kind.

"Do you mean a Popish Priest?" replied Polly. "Pray don't name such a person to my husband; I am sure he would never approve of his coming here."

Marlow had not returned from evening lecture, but entering soon afterwards, his wife appealed to him on the subject, adding:

"Surely we could not receive such a visitor, could we, Marlow? Yet I should be glad to know some one who could show me how to manage and tune this guitar. There is no

master in Cambridge that I can find out, and you will not let me go into the town to inquire for any one that understands it. Yet to ask a Popish Priest to call on us—oh! that would never do.”

“I should not desire any intimacy with him, certainly,” said her husband; “but we surely need not fear seeing him, need we? However we will talk about it another time.”

Even then a thought had crossed his mind—always thirsting for information on every subject—that he should like to know what the Romish doctrine, explained clearly and free from popular exaggeration, *really* was on the point on which he was at issue with his own appointed spiritual guides, in order to be able to cope better with their arguments. A few days later his friend, the Professor, accompanied young Sidney to dine at the cottage. Again the state of the guitar was broached after dinner, and lamented over. They were seated at an open window, looking on to a small grass plot with a few shrubs and flowers, separating the cottage from the road. It was a fine evening in August.

“I wish, Mrs. Sidney,” said their friend, “you would consent to see Mr. Barnes, the musical

gentleman I named to you. I would try to bring him here myself if you were willing," continued the Professor, who, though a man of learning and intellectual attainments, had very broad views on matters of religion. "Mr. Barnes is so agreeable and clever, quite a man of society, and evidently accustomed to the best. Besides, I am by no means sure that he is a Popish Priest, though I conclude he is a Papist, as he has been much abroad, and is now with Lord Stourton, a Popish nobleman, on a visit to a friend of his and mine also, residing in this neighbourhood. Why, I declare, *there is* Mr. Barnes just passing on his way back from the town. Do let me ask him in. What matter his religion, whatever it may be?"

And as his young friends were both silent (Polly looking earnestly at her husband in hopes of a refusal), he walked out at the open window, overtook Mr. Barnes, and after some little persuasion, induced him to allow himself to be conducted to the cottage and presented to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney. His appearance and manner prepossessed Marlow in his favour. Polly hardly dared to look at him, in the very fear of what he might be. The guitar was soon produced and set to rights under his skilful hands,



and on their requesting him to try it, he gaily threw the broad ribbon over his shoulder, saying :

“Mrs. Sidney, you must imagine yourself still in the days of your courtship, and I will sing for your lover, now your husband.”

And he commenced one of those troubadour ditties, then so much in vogue, with a gay and easy air.

Polly was enchanted and forgot almost all her prejudice against the pleasant and fashionably attired gentleman who so obligingly visited them. She was then induced to try the guitar herself. They continued in friendly and animated conversation — young Sidney evidently meeting with a congenial mind, while Polly thought the stranger nearly as learned as her husband, and was charmed by his musical talent. A Popish Priest, indeed, thought she ; I am sure he is no such thing. How could any one suspect this nice pleasant gentleman to be anything so dreadful ! After partaking of some refreshment, Mr. Barnes rose to take his leave, and Marlow addressed him, saying :

“I hope, sir, to have the pleasure of seeing you again. I will not conceal from you that my

friend here has informed me of a rumour that you may be a Priest of the Church of Rome, but on this question I do not wish to dwell" (mutual bowing). "I am satisfied that I am addressing a gentleman of highly cultivated mind and superior attainments, and I shall be happy to make your further acquaintance."

"Mr. Sidney," replied the Priest (for such he was), "I will not dissemble with you, nor will I hesitate to avow to one like yourself that I am a proscribed Popish Priest, but in the present state of the Catholic religion in this country we are forced to be prudent for the sake of others as well as of our own. Of course I shall not intrude on you further unless you desire it."

Polly gradually edged herself as far as she could from the stranger, mentally ejaculating, "Oh dear! I wish he had never come here at all."

Marlow, however, said to Mr. Barnes, "Sir, we shall be very soon leaving this place, but if you will favour me with a call when next you pass this way, if convenient, I shall be much gratified. I should like," he continued, "to ask your opinion of a picture I have, as you seem to be a connoisseur, and you can better examine it by daylight, it being now

quite dark." Mentally he proposed asking information on another subject also.

"I will do so with great pleasure, I assure you," replied Mr. Barnes. "I pass by here nearly every day at present, and have often observed you and your fair lady seated at the window of this pretty cottage, and could not help remarking with much interest your youthful appearance. I must go into Cambridge very early to-morrow morning, for I have an urgent sick call to attend to in the town, and I fear the poor man will not live over the day, even if he should last through this night."

"Will you step in then on your return?" said Marlow. "I shall be at home until ten o'clock, if you are not detained later."

"I hope to be on my road back before then," Mr. Sidney, "and will not fail to call in," was the reply. "Your humble servant, sir; your slave, madam," and after mutual salutations with the air of a courtier, the Priest took his departure.

As soon as they were alone the young wife exclaimed:

"Oh, Marlow, how could you ask that Priest to call again! I never was more disappointed in my life on hearing what he was. You

know what dreadful people those Papists are with their horrid doctrines."

"Don't be uneasy about it, my dear," replied her husband; "you know we shall be soon returning home, and shall probably never see this gentleman again after to-morrow."

"I hope not," rejoined Polly; "but I have heard Lord Stourton has a place near Witham, though I never knew he was a Papist, as he does not live there. But, dear Marlow," she continued, "are you really serious in refusing to take the Sacrament? Surely it is not right to omit doing so. I have read in a book you gave me that it is the duty of all believing Christians to partake of the Lord's Supper."

"It is of no use, Polly," said her husband, "to say any more on that point, for until I feel a definite conviction and belief in regard to *what* I am about to receive in the Sacrament, I cannot be wrong in refraining from it. Surely that is only common sense."

"Well, Marlow, I grieve that you should be so positive in this matter," replied his wife; "and I lament that my guitar has been the cause of our admitting that Priest. Agreeable as he is, he will be the more dangerous if you get

to talk upon religious topics ; and I fear we have done very wrong."

How differently did she view all this shortly afterwards ! She shed tears *then*, and her husband consoled her, saying :

"My darling Polly, I promise you faithfully that we shall neither of us ever see Mr. Barnes again after to-morrow morning, unless you desire it, as you seem to fear his acquaintance so much."



## CHAPTER IV.

**T**HE next morning at breakfast Mrs. Sidney again renewed the conversation about receiving the Sacrament, as follows :

“Marlow, I am going this morning to read over again those chapters in the New Testament that have so puzzled you and disturbed your mind, and perhaps, ignorant as I am, compared with you, I might, with God’s help, understand the text, and be able to throw some light on the matter, so that we may partake of the Lord’s Supper together.”

“That is well, Polly,” said her husband ; “by all means do so, and I will also go and read them attentively once more. Possibly these clouds may disperse before Mr. Barnes arrives, when it will be nearly time for me to go to College,” and he passed into his study ; while Polly, as soon as the breakfast things were

removed, seated herself by a little table at the open window, or glass doors, as they were called, and began reading out of her Bible most assiduously, so much so that she did not hear the latch-gate of the garden open shortly after, nor hear a footstep near her, till starting, she looked up and beheld, standing just before her, the tall and somewhat imposing figure of Mr. Barnes.

"Good-morning, madam," he said, with his usual courtly bow; "I hope I am not too late. May I enter this way as last evening, if Mr. Sidney is at home?"

"Oh, certainly, sir," she replied, with a rather flurried manner, and mentally wishing he had never come to interrupt their present important occupation. She pointed to a chair, adding, "I will just go and call Mr. Sidney," and as she rose to do so, the Priest passed by her little table, and glancing at the open book,

"What," said he, "the gay and sprightly lady that I had the honour of meeting last evening, reading the Bible so early in the day!"

"Yes, sir," replied Polly, drawing herself up; "to me it is a duty, to you, I fear, it is a sealed book; at least, to those who follow your doc-

trines;" and the little woman fancied she was saying something very stringent and *à propos*.

Mr. Barnes seemed about to speak, but suddenly checked himself, and with a look, as she described, of unmistakable pity and sweet compassion, a look which long haunted her, he merely uttered the words, "Poor child!"

Polly laughed downright with her usual vivacity of manner, saying:

"Well, Mr. Barnes, I pity you far more for not reading the Bible than you can pity me because I do read it."

He still made no reply, but walking across the room, observed:

"How goes on the guitar? let us see," and taking it from its case, was going to strike its chords, while Polly turned towards the door to call her husband, who at the same moment entered the room; not observing Mr. Barnes, whom the open door rather concealed, and with his Bible open in his hand, and a little excited in manner, Marlow thus addressed his wife:

"My dearest Polly, it must be as I feared, therefore I beg you will urge me no more on this matter. It is quite impossible for me to take the Sacrament with my present impressions. The more I read, the more mystified I



am. According to the explanation given by our own divines—Ha! Mr Barnes, here already; this is very kind,” he continued, remarking for the first time the Priest with the guitar in his hand.

“I was just going to call you, Marlow,” said Polly, looking much annoyed that her husband should have so committed himself, and disclosed his doubts before a stranger, and that stranger a Popish Priest.

“Now, do just tell me, Mr. Barnes,” proceeded young Sidney earnestly, “what the Roman Catholic doctrine professes regarding the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper; and especially how you explain the sixth chapter of St. John? for I have never known any one of your religion, and I never believe assertions on mere popular report.”

Mr. Barnes remaining silent, though listening to him attentively, the young student observed, still holding the open book:

“Of course one cannot have read history without knowing what the former belief of the Roman Church was on this subject, but is it the same with Romanists of the present day? I have heard statements which would lead me to suppose otherwise; statements which would

seem to shock common sense, and are, perhaps, grossly exaggerated. But please to give me your explanation, sir."

So saying he advanced towards the Priest, placing the open Bible before his eyes, with inquiring looks. The request and the action were performed on the impulse of the moment, and the writer of this narrative has often thought that a good and not unpoetical subject for an artist might be here presented in the scene described, *true* to the letter, yet so fraught with important results to this young couple and their numerous descendants, leading into the bosom of the Catholic Church whole generations yet unborn.

The little drawing-room, with its window opening on to the small lawn skirted with shrubs; vases of flowers in the room as the season might warrant. The group—Mr. Barnes, the good Priest, in the garb of an ordinary gentleman of the day, carelessly holding the guitar, which had been such an *instrument* of Divine Providence, his somewhat surprised countenance mingled with a dignified and courteous exterior; the earnest young student holding the Bible before him, eagerly awaiting his reply; and the almost childish-looking and pretty

little wife casting anxious looks towards her husband, half-doubting, half-fearing the result of his query, yet listening also anxiously for the response which, however, was *not made*, for Mr. Barnes only replied gently:

"I regret much, Mr. Sidney, that I cannot give you the explanation you desire; but in fact I am under a promise to my patron, Lord Stourton, to enter on no controversial matter with any one while I reside with him, though I had nearly broken my pledge a few minutes ago through an observation about the Bible made by Mrs. Sidney. The position of a Catholic nobleman is one demanding great caution, as you must be aware, with the existing penal code in full force, and sometimes even acted upon, though of late we are somewhat more free from anxiety on that score. But," continued he, "there is nothing to prevent my lending you a book, if you will allow me to do so, which will fully explain all you desire to know, perhaps in a better way than any words of mine could do. Shall I bring it to you, Mr. Sidney?"

"I should feel much obliged," was the ready reply.

Polly felt quite frightened.

"A Popish book!" she thought. "Will Marlow really read it?"

"I will either send it by safe hands or bring it myself," said Mr. Barnes. "Do not be in a hurry to return it, I beg. I shall be leaving this place in a day or two with his lordship; but if the book be left at Lord Stourton's house in London, the address of which I will give you, I shall be sure to receive it wherever I may be."

So saying, after a little more conversation and a critical examination of the picture before alluded to, the good Priest took his leave. On the following day a parcel of three books was left by Mr. Barnes himself with a note of apology for being unable to call, being much pressed for time; and possibly he desired to avoid further questions. In their last interview they had inquired after the sick man he was attending and preparing for death.

"He expired in my presence this morning," he replied, "in the holiest dispositions. Those about him remarked that, though they hardly expected he could outlive the night, he seemed to keep alive just to see me once more. Yet," he added, addressing Mrs. Sidney, "at one time he thought, as you do, dear madam, that Roman

Catholics never read the Bible ; and before he died he prayed earnestly for those who hold that opinion."

"Good Mr. Barnes," used she to say, "how I longed later to thank him and ask his pardon for my impertinence ; but I knew nothing then about Catholics, except what I had heard from the most prejudiced sources."

The books were read through most attentively by young Marlow Sidney, and the work of conversion was at once accomplished. Conviction came to his mind of the real presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, as taught in the Catholic Church, which his excellent understanding, helped by God's grace, had so strongly led him to believe. And he gave his adhesion to the doctrine she teaches on all other points. His wife then, at his desire, read the same books ; but her mind, she affirmed, was not like that of her husband. She required much more explanation to understand sufficiently the mysteries of the new faith proposed to her. "Yet," added she, "I never hesitated in following his example practically, as I felt sure that he *must* be right after so much reading and reflection. Later, I loved my religion for its own sake ; but at that time I was foolish, giddy, and thoughtless, and being

two years and a half younger than Marlow, even *that* at *our* age made a difference. Yet I so loved and admired my husband," used the old lady to say, "and had so great a sense of his superior learning, that I verily believe if he had turned *Turk*, I should have become *Turkess*, and thought it all right too."



## CHAPTER V.

**T**HE writer will now continue the narrative in her grandmother's own words, as nearly as she can remember :

“ My husband, after completing his last term, refused honours that he had well earned, to the surprise of his Cambridge friends, fearing they might in some way interfere with the faith of his adoption. We left our cottage and returned to Witham House a few days before Miss Sidney's marriage, which we knew was to take place as soon as her brother had completed his studies. We kept our secret from every one for some time. There was neither chapel nor priest accessible ; indeed, we knew not where to find either nearer than London, where we might get enlightened, as we thought, on the subject, at the residence of some of the ambassadors. We, however, ceased to attend the Protestant Church, much to the annoyance of my mother-in-law.

To have acknowledged the cause would have brought a storm over our heads, not only from the family, but from all the parsons for many miles round. So we kept our own counsel. Mrs. Sidney was rejoiced to see her dear boy again, and very gratified also at his intention of continuing to reside with her, which he proposed to do if possible. His sister once married and living at a distance, Marlow did not much fear his mother's displeasure. After the first disclosure and surprise, he felt sure of obtaining her forgiveness; and he even cherished the hope (long afterwards realised) that she would also become a member of the one true and apostolic Church, as he had loved to call it.

"Soon after his sister's wedding, Marlow informed his mother that he proposed going to London for a few weeks. He had been studying long and hard, he said, and it was but fair that Polly and he should now have a little enjoyment. She could never have guessed what its nature was chiefly to be.

"We went to London accordingly, and on the way we were pondering over and discussing the best means of finding an English Priest, as the ambassador's chaplains would be foreigners, who could perhaps speak very little English.



"A bright thought suggested itself to me," said the old lady. "I remembered a French milliner, of the name of Madame Amand, who lived near the then fashionable quarter of London, adjoining Soho Square, having accompanied my aunt on a former visit, to make some purchases from her. Madame Amand had sometimes sent us things to the country, but on the occasion of my marriage I had actually been bigoted enough to avoid applying to her, having made the sapient reflection that she, being French, was probably a Papist, and I did not choose to deal with such people if I could help it. Even my aunt laughed at this, but I maintained, with the prejudice I had chiefly imbibed from her daughter, that they would be likely to think it no harm to cheat a Protestant if they could.

"Well, to Madame Amand I now resolved to go, both to repair my wrongs towards her, and to extract from her the address of a Catholic Priest, if possible. We had written to engage apartments at the house where my aunt usually stayed when she visited London, and on the day after our arrival we both started on a separate voyage of discovery at a rather early hour.

“Mr. Sidney,” continued the old lady, “had placed me in a coach that I might proceed at once to Madame Amand’s, he having himself determined on calling at Lord Stourton’s, both to pursue his inquiries, and to return the books lent by Mr. Barnes. On arriving at the house of the milliner, after selecting some articles, I told her I was married. She remembered me very well, for she said :

“‘Mademoiselle was always ready to laugh.’

“‘*Madame* now, if you please,’ I replied ; ‘but what will perhaps surprise you more, I am going to turn Roman Catholic’—I had learned no longer to say ‘Papist’—‘and I want you to give me the address of an English Priest, if you know of one.’

“As she looked very incredulous, I explained to her that my husband, Mr. Sidney, was very anxious on the subject, and it was by his desire that I applied to her. Seeing that she hesitated and seemed unwilling to answer, I added :

“‘I am sure, Madame Amand, you must be a Catholic, so don’t deny it, and tell me where a Priest can be found.’

“‘Oh, madame,’ said the terrified French-woman (for I saw she did not believe me), ‘do

not speak any more about a *Prêtre Catholique* ; there may be such a thing here in London, or there may not be, I can tell you *nothing* at all, I do assure you.'

"I am certain she thought she was being questioned with some hostile intention, and I had to try and quiet her fears, which at last I succeeded in doing. I then began to explain how we were situated, and our desire to be received into the Catholic Church while in London.

" 'Oh, pray do not speak too loud,' continued Madame Amand ; 'this is one very bad country for *la religion Catholique* ; shocking indeed, but if you will please to come this way,' said she, conducting me to a back parlour, then, after glancing up and down the stairs to see that no one was within hearing, and carefully closing the door, she began to inform me where she thought I should find an English Priest. I wrote down the address, and took leave of her, promising to call on her again. After stopping at another shop to make some purchases, I drove back to our lodgings, where I found Marlow already returned, and anxiously waiting for me. I really believe at that time he thought I was hardly fit to be

trusted out alone, such a giddy madcap was I. I will tell you an incident, some day," said the old lady, "which will, I fear, prove that he was not wrong. But to return to our more important matter. As soon as Marlow had handed me out of the coach, he told me that he had called upon Lord Stourton, and on sending up his name, was instantly admitted. His lordship had heard about us from Mr. Barnes, who had left England for a time, after accompanying him to London, but he hoped to see him back after a few months' absence. He was most kind and courteous, and after my husband had explained his errand, seemed quite surprised at the promptitude with which Mr. Sidney had submitted all former prejudices to the light of Faith as soon as conviction came to his mind.

" 'He could not,' he said, 'but admire how a young man, circumstanced as he was, as a Cambridge student of such high standing, should, after casting away all temporal obstacles, at once desire to enter the fold of Christ through new and strange paths to him.'

"His lordship then begged his acceptance of some good Catholic books, informing him where he could procure others. Finally, he gave him

the address of a Priest, the Rev. Mr. Horne, which proved to be the same as that given by Madame Amand. There were very few Priests in London then, and those not stationary, but frequently changing their residence, excepting those attached to the Embassies.

“‘I hope, Mr. Sidney,’ said Lord Stourton, ‘that your temporal interest, as a young married man, will not materially suffer from the step you are taking.’

“‘I am master of my own small patrimony,’ replied my husband; ‘but I may perhaps lose my uncle’s estate in Northumberland eventually, should he hear of my becoming what he would call a d——d Papist.’

“‘As he resides so far off, let us hope he may not hear of it,’ said his lordship; ‘you are not obliged to make it known to him.’

“This old uncle kept us later in perpetual fear and anxiety,” added Mrs. Sidney.

“‘In the retired way in which we are obliged to comply with our religious duties,’ proceeded Lord Stourton, ‘few people will trouble themselves about you, if you are commonly prudent. But I think I can tell you a piece of news that will gratify you, if you propose

remaining at Witham. You perhaps know that I have a small property in that neighbourhood, which is now untenanted, and I think of removing thither with my family. In fact I cannot afford to live in London. Fines and penalties have impoverished us since the change of religion in this country, like most of our fellow Catholics, and the difficulty of providing for the junior members entails sacrifices which our Protestant countrymen in my position are not called upon to make. Indeed, I often wonder how it is that we have even as much as we have left. But we must economise now, and since my father's death I have been endeavouring to put matters straight. When we go to Witham Place,' pursued his lordship, 'which I hope will be in a month or two hence, I shall try to secure an English chaplain, if possible, which will benefit not only ourselves, but any Catholics who may chance to live near us. I am remaining in town partly for that purpose, awaiting the arrival of our good Bishop, Dr. Challoner. He is our Vicar Apostolic, and I am sure you will be gratified at becoming acquainted with so holy and excellent a man.'

“‘I shall indeed, my lord,’ replied Marlow ;  
‘how and when can I have that honour ?’

“‘I will give you a letter for him, and will  
send it to you as soon as I hear of his arrival,  
as he is expected daily.’

“My husband then took his leave, much  
gratified by his visit.

“We felt of course,” proceeded Mrs. Sidney,  
“most thankful for what Marlow had heard from  
Lord Stourton, that is of his intention to reside  
at Witham Place. The Stourton family have  
long since parted with that property, having  
also greatly increased their wealth by inher-  
itance and alliance. A great difficulty was  
thus removed. Had we determined on residing  
in London, Marlow feared he could never have  
persuaded his mother to join us. She would  
perhaps in vexation have finally taken up her  
abode with her daughter, which would be likely  
to have produced a lasting separation and cool-  
ness between the mother and son, with no  
human probability of her ever becoming a  
Catholic. So we felt most grateful to the  
Almighty that this formidable obstacle to the  
practice of our religion was overcome, and it  
encouraged us greatly in the cause we had  
embarked in. On the following day Mr. Sidney

called on the Rev. Mr. Horne, the good Priest, who soon afterwards received us into the Church. He found my husband already well instructed from the books he had read, and as for me," said the old lady, "I had such child-like confidence in his judgment that I readily adhered to whatever he decided on. I had, I fear, no better dispositions than these when I became a Catholic, and so I told our good Priest.

" 'That will do, my child,' he replied ; 'you wish to do what is right, do you not ? and you feel you are doing *right* in embracing the Faith of the Catholic Church.'

" 'I feel that I am doing right,' I said, 'in following my husband's example ; but I do not understand all about it as he does.'

" 'Suppose,' said Mr. Horne, 'that your husband was going to do something that you felt was wrong, would you do the same merely because he did so ?'

" 'Oh, that could not be,' replied I.

" 'But only let us suppose,' said he, 'for argument sake, that it were so, would you then do the same ?'

" 'Oh no,' I rejoined ; 'at least, I hope not.'

" 'Then, don't disturb yourself about your motives,' continued good Mr. Horne ; 'you have



really better ones than you imagine. The grace of God is with you although you feel it not.' He then marked some passages in a Catholic book for me to read, and hoped to see us soon again.

"We were received into the Church, and read our abjuration in a room where he lived—chapel there was none. He spoke also to us about Dr. Challoner, and told us many things about the difficulties Catholics labour under, which we had previously very little knowledge of. Lord Stourton called on us—Lady Stourton being absent on a visit in the country with her own family. We were soon after presented to Bishop Challoner by Mr. Horne. He received us with kind encouraging words, and a day was appointed for us to complete all our Catholic duties."



## CHAPTER VI.

**T**HE old lady then proceeded to narrate the following most striking and graphic picture of the times in which they lived :

“ We started from our lodgings at five in the morning to be present for the first time at a Catholic religious service, or at prayers, as it was generally called, for the word Mass was scarcely ever used in conversation. We arrived at a public house in some back street near the house in which Mr. Horne resided. I felt rather frightened, seeing some very rough-looking poor people as we passed through the entrance, though all were very quiet. These people, I was told, were Irish workmen, who, with a few women, were assembled on that Sunday morning to hear prayers when they could be admitted. We hurried past them, but I could not help clinging to Marlow, having a sort of undefined

fear of what was going to happen, for I had no inclination to laugh then. We mounted higher and higher, escorted by a young man whom Marlow had seen at the Priest's house, who had come forward at once to conduct us. When we arrived at the top the door of a garret was unlocked, and as we entered we saw at the farthest end what seemed a high table or long chest of drawers with the back turned towards us. A piece of carpet was spread before it by the young man, who, after he had placed a few chairs and cushions in order, pointed out to us our seats. In a few minutes the door opened, and the Venerable Dr. Challoner, accompanied by Mr. Horne and another Priest, entered the garret, the door of which was secured inside by the assistant, who then proceeded to unlock some drawers behind what I found was to be used as an altar, and take out the vestments and other things requisite for the Church service. Water was brought to the Bishop, and from his hands we received our conditional baptism, which had been fully explained to us. We then, one after the other, entered a sort of closet with the door open, and kneeling received absolution, having previously made our confession to Mr. Horne. After returning to our seats the

Bishop put on a vestment and a mitre, and gave us a short and excellent exhortation. We then knelt before him and he administered to us the sacrament of Confirmation, after which there occurred a strange scene through my foolishness. Our good Priest, Mr. Horne, whispered something to my husband, who motioned to me to take off my glove.

“ ‘What is to be done next?’ I asked in a low voice, when, to my utter surprise, he caught hold of my left hand and almost snatched off my wedding ring.

“ ‘Heavens! Marlow, what are you about?’ said I.

“ ‘Polly,’ he whispered, ‘I had forgotten to tell you that we have to be remarried. I only heard of it yesterday. You know it is a sacrament in the Catholic Church.’

“ This passed my comprehension altogether, and I replied,

“ ‘But, Marlow, we are married; why must we be married again?’

“ I felt quite confused and ready to cry with a feeling of great annoyance, when Mr. Horne, perceiving that some discussion on the subject was passing between us, approached me, saying,

“ ‘Mrs. Sidney, a dispensation is required in

the Catholic Church for first cousins to contract matrimony. It is doubtful in your case whether a renewal of your marriage is obligatory, but the Bishop thinks it better you should receive the sacrament and nuptial benediction if you are willing.'

"I acquiesced immediately, and the ceremony was performed. All this was done in about half an hour, and I thought to myself, well, we have now received four sacraments this morning, and I knew the fifth and most solemn was to come. I therefore tried, as our good Priest had directed me, to pray to God with gratitude for His goodness, though I fear I was not half thankful enough at *that* time. Soon afterwards we heard the door-key turn, and several rough footsteps enter the garret, then some gentle taps, and words were exchanged between a powerful-looking Irishman who kept his post close to it, and those outside, which were pass-words of admission. The key was again turned each time any one entered, and just before the Bishop vested himself to say Mass, bolts were drawn also, and no one else could pass into the garret. In the meanwhile the young man in attendance had prepared all that was required for Mass, taken from behind what was used as the altar, which was covered

with a linen cloth. A crucifix and two lighted candles were placed on it, and in the front was suspended a piece of satin damask, in the centre of which was a cross in gold lace. The ceremonies of the Mass had been explained to me by Marlow, who seemed to follow the Latin prayers as if he had been used to them all his life. We received the Holy Communion when notice was given to us, both the Priests holding before us a linen cloth.

“When all was over, and I was praying to God to increase my faith, I heard the door-key turn once more, and all the rough footsteps leaving the garret. The Bishop, having unvested, remained kneeling before us while the people departed. The two Priests, assisted by the young man in attendance, replaced the vestments, candlesticks, and all that was used at the Mass, behind the Altar, locking all up carefully, and leaving the garret—an ordinary one in appearance—as before. Mr. Horne then requested us to follow him to the house where he was staying, and breakfast with the Bishop. We both felt quite happy, and I seemed to forget my fears and disquieting feelings. I thought also of my husband’s goodness, with God’s help, in bringing us through all this, for

without him, as I told the Bishop, I should never have become a Catholic. After breakfast we asked his blessing and took our leave; and so ended that, to us, most important morning, on which we had received five sacraments of the Catholic Church.

"During the remainder of our stay in London we heard Mass every Sunday, either in the same garret or at one of the ambassadors' chapels. Mass was rarely said on week-days for a congregation. We extended our period of absence longer than we had proposed, and became also acquainted with a few Catholics.

"On our return to Witham House, where my mother-in-law was anxiously expecting us, wondering, as she had written to her son, what could induce him so to prolong his stay in London, Marlow soon informed her of our change of religion. She was at first greatly surprised and grieved; and, what amused me not a little, was inclined to put all the blame on *me*. Her beloved son could do no wrong, in her eyes, unless incited and urged on by some one else.

"'I know, Marlow, it is that minx, Polly, that has persuaded you to turn Papist,' would

she say; 'you never had such a notion before your marriage.'

"'You are quite mistaken, my dear mother, I assure you,' replied my husband, 'for she disliked Catholics far more than I did, though in my ignorance I certainly felt no friendly feelings towards them, and believed many things which I have since found to be untrue.'

"'Ignorance!' said Mrs. Sidney, 'then I suppose *I* am ignorant, all our good clergy also, and you and Polly only are enlightened.'

"'Oh, mother,' Marlow would reply, 'do not speak in that way; but we will pray hard for you, that it may please God to open your eyes to the truth, and that you may become a member of Christ's true Church.'

"'How dare you use God's name in that wicked way?' she would rejoin angrily.

"In fine, we were obliged to put up with much lecturing, though Marlow's spirit was sometimes roused, and then he would take his hat and walk out. This always softened his mother more than anything he could say, as she could not bear to drive him from her presence. As for me, I never argued with her, but let her rail on as long as she liked. So, by degrees, she calmed down, and left us to practise our religion



in peace, having still hopes, as she said, that we should later see our folly, and return to the Church of England.

"We soon had the benefit of Lord and Lady Stourton's residence in our neighbourhood, and I ever found the latter a most kind friend and neighbour. Mr. Barnes returned to them later, as Chaplain, to my great joy, and we met frequently at their house the best Catholic society.

"For many years we were forced to observe great caution and privacy in the performance of all Catholic duties. The prejudices of the people were set so strongly against us, that even the Government could do little to ameliorate our condition.\*

"We noticed how, year by year, a more tolerant spirit sprang up; and on our removal to London many years later, when our family had greatly increased, we found a much greater facility in performing our religious duties than

\* Ignorant prejudices pervaded all classes, which are now much dispelled. Even shortly before Catholic Emancipation, on one occasion, when a gentleman was travelling in a stage-coach, in which the passengers discussed the measure, *all* deprecating it, one lady in *appearance* declared that if those Romanists got their way she should not consider herself safe in her bed!!

at the time of our conversion. Small chapels were opened in some places, or more frequently rooms converted into chapels: but very little was done until the influx of emigrant Priests and laity at the French Revolution. A more decided change then took place. The zeal and edifying example of those good Priests did much for Catholics in England; and the compassion their misfortunes excited served our cause immensely. The Penal Laws gradually became as a dead letter, excepting those of exclusion. No one thought of molesting the foreign Priests, and as a consequence our English Priests were tolerated also.

“It was not until after we were settled in London that my mother-in-law became a Catholic. She resided with us until her death, retaining to the last her strong affection for her son; and never did a son love and respect a mother more than he did.

“His uncle in Northumberland was never convinced of our change of religion, although my husband went to visit him occasionally. Some *kind* friend had indeed whispered it to him, and he had even received anonymous letters to that effect.

“On one occasion when Mr. Sidney paid

him a visit at Cowper Hall, he said, on his arrival :

“‘Marlow, my boy, they want to persuade me that you have joined those d——d Papists’ (the Sidneys were always a very anti-Catholic family), ‘but I don’t believe one word of it. I know their tricks, but they won’t succeed, my boy.’

“Another time he said :

“‘It’s of no use asking you, for of course you would not be fool enough to own it if you had turned Papist.’

“‘But are you sure I am not one?’ replied my husband, laughing.

“‘Quite sure, my boy,’ said the old gentleman. ‘I know why they say so,’ and so it passed off.

“Mr. Sidney was with his uncle at his death, which happened in his ninety-sixth year. Shortly before it took place he said, turning to his nephew,

“‘Had you become a Papist, Marlow, you should never have had an acre or a shilling of mine, but I won’t gratify those who have been trying to make me think so.’

“His uncle having the fee simple of his estate, could dispose of it as he pleased. The matter was in the hands of God, and His Providence

decreed that my husband should not suffer that loss through obeying the dictates of his conscience."

So ended the old lady's narrative. The converts both lived to an advanced age during the unusually long period of a nearly *seventy* years' union. They both saw their great-grand-children, all their descendants being Catholics. Mrs. Sidney outlived her husband five years, retaining nearly to the last much of her vivacity of manner modified by age. She never had much infirmity, but sank gradually and died calmly at the age of ninety-one.





## INCIDENTS AND REMINISCENCES.

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### CHAPTER VII.

#### A MISTAKE.

"**I** WILL relate to you, my dear," said the old lady one day to her granddaughter, "a circumstance that occurred during our first visit to London, shortly after our marriage, which will perhaps show that my husband's fears regarding my being trusted out alone were not quite unfounded, such a giddy young madcap was I.

"We had but just come out of the park, where we had been taking a walk one afternoon, when somebody or something had so tickled my fancy as to cause me to laugh immoderately in my usual flippant, childish way, and as I was talking perhaps rather too quickly and too loudly,

without any regard to being overheard, we chanced to meet a fine-looking old gentleman of very distinguished appearance. He looked at me rather attentively as he passed by, and though Marlow whispered 'Hush, Polly! not so loud,' I paid no attention, but laughed outright again, throwing myself forward carelessly at the same time. In these days such behaviour would have been simply ill-bred, but at that time had I been a lady of fashion it would have been thought quite natural, and perhaps by some very charming. However, as I was not one, my very youthful appearance, I suppose, caused me to be taken for something much worse, as the gentleman muttered as he walked on,

" 'What a mere child! lost so early.'

" I blushed crimson, as you may suppose, and felt quite ashamed of my levity, so that I hope the lesson did me good. But my husband having caught the words, turned round quickly to the stranger and said angrily :

" 'Sir, you have grossly insulted this lady, who is my wife. I insist upon an immediate apology for your insolent observation, or draw your sword sir,' and he put his hand on his own.

" You may imagine my terror. We were not yet Catholics, and had not sufficiently learned

the Catholic doctrine of forbearance. So Marlow fired up at the affront put upon me, though I fear I deserved it. But the gentleman instantly uncovered, and making me a courtly and profound bow, said :

“ ‘Madam, I most humbly ask your pardon. I was indeed in error, as I now plainly see even without your husband’s explanation. I am not surprised at his resenting my remark, and it will make me more cautious in future. I beg, sir, to apologise also to you for my unlucky mistake.’

“ ‘Quite sufficient sir,’ replied Mr. Sidney, ‘say no more, I pray. My wife is from the country and little accustomed to the restraint of London manners.’

“ ‘Ah ! I see it all clearly,’ replied the gentleman ; ‘but she is far too young and too pretty not to excite attention with her sprightly vivacity and gaiety of demeanour.’

“ This is what he said, though I don’t know that I was so very pretty, but I was of a lively disposition and fond of fun and frolic.

“ He then addressed me once more, saying, ‘My dear young lady, will you forgive an old fogie who might be your grandfather, for giving you a piece of advice ? Do not walk out in



London without throwing a veil over your hat to conceal in part, at least, your very youthful features, especially when walking with such a good-looking fellow as your husband,' and again bowing low, and I curtsying in return, he left us.

"Mr. Sidney believed him to be a man of high rank, as he saw him shortly afterwards step into a grand coach with three footmen behind and two more running on each side. By the glimpse he got of the large coat of arms on the panels of his carriage, he supposed him to be the then Duke of ——."



## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

“**ONE** day as we were walking through a street leading out of Soho Square, then a very fashionable quarter, Mr. Sidney pointed out to me the house where he was born. It appeared to be inhabited, but he remarked, as we passed,

“‘ I wonder whether it is haunted now !’

“ On my inquiring what he meant, he told me that when his father took the house, he was not aware that it had the reputation of being haunted.

“ ‘ Not that my father cared a pin about it,’ said he. ‘ He was a man of strong nerves, and laughed at such stories, but on my mother’s account he was greatly annoyed. Her fears, indeed, were carried to such an extent as to make her quite miserable. She imagined one

day that she had seen the ghost, in the shape of a woman in a brown dress, in which guise report said that it always appeared. The woman, she affirmed, was standing on the landing of the stairs, and when Mrs. Sidney accosted her, asking what she wanted, the reply was, 'The woman of the house,' uttered in a solemn tone.

"Whether this was so, and that it really was a ghost, or that the manner of addressing Mrs. Sidney did not please her, she said no more, but ran downstairs, much alarmed. On inquiry, no person had been known to enter the house of the description given by her, either at that time, or any other; and 'nothing more,' added my husband, 'was seen of the ghost that I ever heard.'

"It seems that this occurrence caused the fact of the house being haunted to transpire, and Mrs. Sidney, with the pettishness of a much-indulged wife, and a beauty, declared that nothing would induce her to remain in it, though Mr. Sidney had taken a long lease and gone to great expense in fitting it up. He tried to compound the matter with first one, and afterwards a *second* lady companion for his wife so that she might never be left alone,

unless she pleased, for even one minute, as one of these ladies was always to be in attendance.

“‘I remember them both well,’ said my husband, ‘when I was a little boy. One was the daughter of an officer in the army, the other a surgeon’s widow; both were very kind to me, and the latter gave me my first reading lessons.’

“He then stated that he had heard his mother say that the handles of the door of their bedroom would often rattle in an unaccountable manner in the night, and they frequently heard strange noises, but she took great care, as she said, never again to speak to the ghost, as she had the idea that she was, in some way, the object of its wrath.

“As for Mr. Sidney, he never troubled himself about it; but when his wife awakened him to listen to the noise, he would only laugh at her fears, and sitting up in bed, would call out, ‘Come on, raw head and bloody bones! I don’t fear you.’

“She would then rebuke him, saying, ‘It is all very well for *you*, Mr. Sidney, who could knock down *three* ordinary ghosts’ (he was a very tall and powerful man), ‘but it is no joke

for me. I can't bear these noises, and if I saw that woman again, I am sure it would be my death. She told me she wanted the woman of the house, so she must have meant me, and I can't stand it any longer.'

"Mr. Sidney then, to pacify her, promised to look for another domicile.

"There was some rumour of a stone in the paved yard at the back of the house having given way, as if the earth were loose underneath, and on its being put right, the spade struck against something, which proved to be a coffin, of a rough kind, in which was found a skeleton.

"My husband repeated that it was hard to know how far these reports were correct, as he was so young at the time, but certain he was that his mother lived for some years in terror of this ghost.

"‘You know,’ he added, ‘that we quitted the house immediately after the death of my father, which was a most unexpected event, as he was, to all appearance, a very healthy man; yet he died rather suddenly in the prime of his life.

"Mrs. Sidney always connected her early bereavement with her husband's disbelief in

the ghost, and the ridicule he cast on its warnings. She moreover declared, that under any circumstances, she never would have remained much longer in the Haunted House."



## CHAPTER IX.

### EQUESTRIANS.

**W**HEN Marlow Sidney was a young man he was an exceedingly good rider, and was very fond of hunting and coursing, and after these sports he could seldom avoid joining the jovial and convivial dinners usual on such occasions.

At that time drinking to excess is well known to have been too common a practice at such meetings, far more so indeed than at the present time.

Mr. Sidney was often, as he said, at his wit's end to try and manage to indulge himself with his favourite pastime, and avoid at the same time the inebriety which usually followed, (he having a great horror of that vice); as these assemblies seldom ended until all his boon companions were stretched on the floor, and one

after another carried by servants to their carriages to be taken home.

He therefore used to relate that as soon as the wine began to be passed round he would fill his glass, and then quickly empty it, on the first opportunity that he could find to do so unnoticed, into his large and high hunting boots, such as were then worn. This he had to repeat each time the bottle came his way, though he always, he said, provided himself with a large glass, in case he could not dispose of the contents of his wine-glass quickly enough, throwing then the wine into the former, saying that he was reserving it a little. But it was always necessary to refill his wine-glass; not to do so would have been considered a mark of ill-breeding, and almost insulting, at that time.

"Often," said Mr. Sidney, "have I walked away from the table with my boots as full as they could hold with the wine I had thrown into them, but which I would much rather should be there than be imbibed by me."

As he generally outstayed the rest of the party he could then take off his boots and get rid of the wine.

On one occasion a gentleman witnessed this manoeuvre and chaffed him about it, but he held



his ground in the matter, saying: "You would do well to follow my example."

The gentleman happened to be a neighbour and friend, and less inclined than the rest to habits of inebriety; he therefore only replied: "I really think I will imitate you, it is a capital plan," and he saw that ever after this gentleman on similar convivial meetings made his own boots also the receptacle of most of the wine that came to his share.

Mr. and Mrs. Sidney were acquainted with a young lady friend who was passionately fond of riding, and she was often accompanied by the former in her equestrian exercise through the country.

One day as they approached a town he observed his fair companion greatly quickened her pace, and starting off at a gallop rode on so fast and hard that, though accustomed to a highly-bred and mettled horse, he found it difficult to keep up with her. However he succeeded in doing so, being rather surprised that she should like to gallop in that way, her habit blowing about and her hair disarranged, through the streets of the town, though she guided her horse pretty well clear of obstacles, being an excellent horsewoman. On getting into the

high road again the young lady turned her horse's head suddenly round, which checked its pace at once, and she then owned that she had previously lost all control over it, and that the animal had fairly run away with her.

The same lady afterwards became the wife of a clergyman of a rather eccentric character, and many years her senior in point of age.

Mr. and Mrs. Sidney were present at their wedding, and Miss —— chose to be married in a very handsome riding-habit, such as were then worn, with a hat and feathers something in the Gainsborough style, now imitated, with an aigrette set with diamonds fastening the plume, and the front of her habit body studded with the same costly jewels.

When the bridegroom entered the church with his party, meeting his bride at the door dressed in her favourite costume, he started with surprise and looked not very well pleased, though he was well aware of her predilection for riding, and had frequently of course seen her in a similar though less expensive dress.

The ceremony being over, and congratulations received by the newly married pair from their friends, the bridegroom gave his hand to his bride and conducted her as usual down the

church, where a carriage and four was ready to receive them, it being arranged that they were to start at once for his rectory in a distant county. To the surprise of every one, however, the newly married Rector placed his hand on his lady's hat, and lifting it off her head, addressed her as follows :

"Madam, that hat might very well become Miss —, but it does not respond to the character and position of Mrs. —, wife of the Rector of —, therefore I must beg that you will allow me to displace it," and he handed it to one of the bridesmaids, her sister ; "and these jewels, madam, may also be dispensed with," so saying he cut them off deliberately with a pocket-knife from her habit.

The lady looked rather mortified at first, but controlling herself, soon regained her good-humour, and smilingly acquiesced with his wishes, only saying, "But I shall have nothing on my head."

"Oh," said her husband, "anything will do in the carriage," and they actually drove off, the bride tying a silk handkerchief over her head, as he even objected to her wearing her sister's hat, which was something in the same style though of a plainer description.

The spectators shook their heads as the carriage disappeared, some prophesying that the union they had witnessed would prove anything but felicitous. They were, however, mistaken. The lady acquired great influence over her husband by humouring his little whims, and, as the stories say, lived very happily ever afterwards.



## CHAPTER X.

### THE SECOND SIGHT.

**M**R. SIDNEY used to relate that as he was returning from one of his journies to the north of England, from a visit to his old uncle and namesake, a journey which then occupied six or seven days in performing, on arriving at York, he met at the inn where he dined, a Scotch gentleman, who entered the stage-coach with him, they being then the only inside passengers. They soon got into familiar conversation, and the gentleman who appeared to be a few years senior to his fellow traveller and a man of education and intellectual capacity seemed greatly to enjoy the novelty of the English scenery, remarking that it was his first visit so far south, and residing as he did in Inverness-shire, he had never travelled further as yet than to Edinburgh.

In those days, in fact, travelling for mere pleasure or without some necessity or object in view was not general. He himself, Mr. Sidney observed, though then still a young man, was advised to see that his will was made all right before he started on these long journies, in a lumbering stage-coach of the old style, liable to frequent accidents and delays; though some may consider railway travelling at this present time hardly less dangerous, if so much more expeditious. However, on this occasion the weather being fine, and in the month of June, all went on smoothly, and the English gentleman enjoyed the pleasant conversation of his Scottish companion, who seemed well acquainted with his own country, and related, with apparent satisfaction, the circumstances connected with his present journey, the pleasure he had found in exploring the old city of York, where he had spent two days, and his keen appreciation of the points of difference between the country he was passing through and his own Highland surroundings in Scotland, loving, however, with devotion, his native land evidently, as the Scots always do.

Mr. Sidney never once alluded to any of his own antecedents or even to the place he came

from, residing as he still did at Witham ; but on the stranger observing that he did not intend, on this his first visit to the sister country, to hurry through it, but to stop on his road wherever he could find interest sufficient, he asked his fellow-passenger what town on the way between York and London he would recommend him to remain at next for a day or so.

Mr. Sidney suggested Derby, where he might enjoy the pleasant aspect of the surrounding country, with many objects of interest in the town and neighbourhood. The gentleman thanked him, and was allowed by his companion chiefly to monopolize the talking, contenting himself with occasional questions concerning Scotland, its agricultural prospects, &c., all which were most courteously responded to. After some allusion to the manners and customs in the Highlands, Mr. Sidney ventured to inquire whether the lower classes in general believed in the Second Sight, as it was called, and whether it was deemed a supernatural gift, for he could hardly suppose, he said, that such was the opinion of persons in the higher walks of society. Had he ever known any one, he asked, who professed to have this gift, and was it not thought rather to be no more than a

shrewd guess at circumstances, the heads of which had come to the knowledge of the party in some chance way?

While still speaking, he observed his fellow-traveller cast down his eyes, and his face assumed a pained expression as if the subject were distasteful to him. Mr. Sidney felt surprised at this, but only remarked:

"You know, sir, we Southerners are curious about such matters, but I should not wish to give offence or seem intrusive, or desire to impute deception to any of our fellow countrymen, as the Scotch are to us; I only enquire for information's sake, but if the subject is not agreeable let us avoid it. You probably do not believe in the popular notion about Second Sight any more than myself, and in every country there are superstitions of some sort."

The stranger made no reply, but looking out of the window as if to divert his thoughts from the subject, he remarked that they were travelling at a very slow rate.

"We are indeed," replied his companion, "but we are on the rise of a hill, we shall go faster presently."

The gentleman still seemed desiring to distract his thoughts and attention with other



common-place observations, made, however, in a constrained way, when suddenly (as though in spite of his endeavours) his eyes apparently became fixed on some object before him, and muttering to himself, "I can resist it no longer," he remained in the same position for two or three minutes as if reading something high up on the opposite side of the coach, with fixed look and attention. Presently, turning to his fellow-traveller, he said :

"My dear sir, I am really sorry this topic has been started, for to those who possess this fatal gift, for such it is, believe me it neither adds to their happiness or satisfaction, but rather the reverse. I had hoped, while travelling in England, to be free from it, but your evident curiosity on the subject seems likely to be answered in a way you perhaps do not expect, and may not like."

Mr. Sidney, more and more astonished at what he heard, and thinking to himself, "Surely this gentleman cannot profess to believe in such a thing as this Second Sight," remained silent.

"I am quite unacquainted with your name, sir," proceeded the stranger, "but I may tell you that you have just returned from a visit to

a relative to whom you conceal that you are a Roman Catholic."

Greatly surprised, Mr. Sidney observed, "I do not know, sir, how you have become possessed of the knowledge you have of my family affairs," (for in his uncle's house he supposed that the religion he professed was quite unknown to any one, his uncle included); he added, "I cannot imagine how a perfect stranger as you are to me should have thought it worth his while to acquire such information."

"Well, sir," replied the gentleman, "you must admit, at least, that what I have said is true, though I assure you I do not name it with any hostile motive, but I feel compelled to tell you what I know concerning you. I never saw you until to-day and can have no object in giving offence, but I may perhaps convince you that there is such a gift as Second Sight, undesirable as it may be to its possessor."

Mr. Sidney felt still very incredulous, and probably shewed as much in his countenance, when his companion again fixed his eyes as before, then turned towards his fellow-passenger, saying, "You will find on returning to your home that one of your children has been dangerously ill but has nearly recovered."

This was a still further surprise, for, in fact, he had received letters from his wife informing him of that circumstance and of his child's recovery, but had never shown these letters to any one, having them in his coat pocket, nor had he mentioned it when at Cowpen, his uncle being an invalid he had avoided troubling him with any unpleasant news. He only remarked, however, "I cannot, of course, account, sir, for your acquaintance with this matter, but I think as the subject I unfortunately broached is now not pleasant to *either* of us, we had better beguile the time with other conversation. Yet in his heart, as Mr. Sidney said, he had no further desire to cultivate his companion's society. Commencing to speak on general subjects of interest, they discoursed on the politics of the day, the different methods of agriculture in England and Scotland, and the literature of both countries. At last they both remained silent, one gentleman ruminating on the singularity of this stranger's information on points only concerning himself and family, while the other never deviated from the courteous and well-bred demeanour that he had shewn from the first.

As they approached the town where Mr.

Sidney had proposed to him to stop, his fellow-traveller fixed his eyes again suddenly, as if facing some object or listening to some voice opposite. Then, addressing his companion, he said quietly,

"Though as I said before, sir, your name is, unknown to me, nor do I know where you reside, permit me once more to refer to the subject we had agreed to avoid; we shall probably never meet again, but believe me there are certain gifts and perceptions by no means desirable to those who possess them, that are given only to the few by an Almighty dispenser of such gifts. Before I quit you, and your very agreeable companionship during this journey, I will tell you that you possess a family ring, once belonging to Sir Philip Sidney, engraved with an heraldic shield and arms full emblazoned on a cornelian stone with crest and motto '*Quo fata vocant.*' There is" (and as he said this he again fixed his eyes) "a slight indenture on the gold setting, as if from a blow or cut. Am I correct or not, sir?" he added.

His auditor, being this time fairly mystified to the utmost, did not reply. The ring alluded to, which had belonged to his father, was in a cabinet at home, the key of which he had with

him. Seeing his fellow-traveller's unfeigned astonishment, the stranger, as he rose to prepare to leave the coach, observed :

“ Well, sir, what do you think of the Second Sight now ? ” and wishing Mr. Sidney a courteous farewell and happy return to his family, he alighted.

On his arrival at Witham, after the first greetings were over, the traveller rushed to the cabinet where, after unlocking it, he found his ring in its case apparently just as he had left it. When relating these circumstances, Mr. Sidney always remarked that he offered no opinion on the matter, but only gave the facts as they occurred, repeating the stranger's words as nearly as he could remember, though he never heard his name or saw him afterwards.



## CHAPTER XI.

### SIR GEORGE MANNOCK.

**M**R. and Mrs. Sidney were intimately acquainted with Sir George Mannock, of Gifford's Hall, in Suffolk, with whom the baronetcy expired. Sir George was a Priest and a Jesuit worthy of his calling. He was an accomplished scholar, and he and Marlow Sidney found much gratification in each other's society. Sir George generally dressed like a gentleman of rank of that period, rather, perhaps, overshooting the mark, as people are apt to do when a motive exists for dissembling their true position. He wore silk or velvet coats, made in the most fashionable style, ruffles of the finest lace, bag-wig, diamond ring, pin, and buckles, with his sword conspicuous; in fact, his appearance, according to his intention (and, as at that time was but prudent,) was

the remotest possible from that of a Priest and a Jesuit.

For a gentleman of landed property to be a member of that proscribed Society would (if known) be fraught with danger to himself, as well as to his family and friends. He, therefore, resided at his mansion of Gifford's Hall, with his sister-in-law, the widow of the preceding baronet, without any distinctive exterior from that of his late brother.

Mr. Sidney was informed by Sir George that he had been granted a dispensation to marry, if he chose. He being the last of his race, Catholics could ill afford to see extinct an old family of some rank and position in the country, when all who possessed any influence, and who could oppose the overwhelming majority of their religious opponents, were requisite to aid their cause. Sir George Mannock, however, declined to profit by this concession, obtained for him by his friends. He remarked that as his *nine* immediate predecessors had all failed in leaving male issue, it seemed to be the Will of God that the baronetcy should collapse; nor would he break his ordination vows with the view of sustaining it. He felt also persuaded that even were he to marry he should only

have reason to regret having done so, and that no heir would be accorded to him.

Sir George, therefore, adhered to his vocation as a Priest, and officiated privately as such, having a small chapel within his library, the door of which was always locked. In all other respects he maintained the exterior and demeanour of a man of fashion, to use the term then in vogue.

Both Sir George and Lady Mannock, his sister-in-law, were much attached to the writer's mother, Anastasia Mary Mannock Sidney, who was their god-daughter. She was the second daughter and fourth living child of her parents, and from her earliest years often spent many happy days at Gifford's Hall. Lady Mannock indeed greatly desired to be allowed to adopt her young godchild, and retain her to reside entirely with her and Sir George, but Mr. Sidney, who always had rather strict notions concerning parental authority and the duty of children (besides that this same daughter was always considered her father's favourite), feared that she might become estranged from her parents and her own home. He therefore politely declined Lady Mannock's kind offer.

Sir George often came to visit Mr. and Mrs.



Sidney while they resided at Witham House, and he and Mr. Sidney being on the most friendly and intimate terms, often took short journeys and made little excursions together. Sir George Mannoek having travelled much for that period, had many amusing and curious anecdotes to relate, one of which, when he himself bore a prominent part on the occasion, will be narrated in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER XII.

### THE PRIEST AND THE PARSON.

**S**IR GEORGE MANNOCK lived on very friendly terms with an Anglican clergyman whose living was in the gift of Sir George, near Gifford's Hall. The profession of the latter, with which this clergyman was well acquainted, seemed, however, to be no bar to their intimacy. No doubt there was good policy on both sides in their friendship, independently of any mutual attraction to each other's society. At all events the Parson was a frequent guest at the mansion of his friend and patron, and occasionally accompanied him in the short excursions which he occasionally made in his travelling chariot.

On one of these expeditions they arrived at a village inn in a neighbouring county, and while they were at dinner they discovered that a

rumour had preceded them to the effect that a Popish Priest and Jesuit would arrive in the same village on that day.

It being near a country town, a great influx of people had assembled, and this was whispered to Sir George by his own man, a confidential servant. They soon observed that a large crowd was collecting beneath the windows.

Presently shouts and murmurs were heard of "Where is the Popish rascal? where is the villain? We'll serve him out!" and other such hostile demonstrations.

The Parson looked rather uncomfortable, and suggested that they had better not attempt to leave the inn by the front door, but step out at the back entrance, walk through a field, and from thence gain the high road, where the carriage could overtake them. To their dismay, however, they perceived that many of the people had gone round to the back of the house, as if resolved to blockade the premises and bar their exit at all points.

Sir George, who had great presence of mind, seeing the danger, determined to put a bold front on the matter. He ordered the horses to be put to immediately, and the carriage brought up. Taking his hat, and walking before his friend,

he appeared with him at the door of the inn, when the mob, which had greatly increased, renewed their shouts and execrations, swearing with great oaths that the Jesuit should not enter the carriage; but Sir George, with a quick eye, soon perceived that the villagers had fixed on his more soberly attired companion as being the Popish Priest, not suspecting that the portly and aristocratic-looking gentleman taking the lead towards his chariot could be the Priest and Jesuit they were in quest of.

As they seemed bent on intercepting the poor Parson, who appeared greatly alarmed on finding the mistake they laboured under in his regard, Sir George instantly made up his mind to profit by it for the advantage of both.

The chariot was unable to approach the door, so, taking his friend's arm, he said coolly to his servant:

"Thomas, we shall walk on quietly; tell the post-boy to follow us."

They then made their way onwards, and his air of authority, added to a very dignified manner, overawed the populace for a moment; they proceeded, therefore, through the crowd, which, however, soon turned after them, repeating all their threats. In vain the poor Parson

began to protest, for he soon found in a practical way that he was their mark, by a stone or two being levelled at him, but Sir George entreated him, for both their sakes, to remain passive a minute or two longer, until the carriage could approach them.

He had so far accomplished his object in dispersing the people, who were no longer in a dense mass as at the door of the inn, but straggling after them in small bodies.

Just, however, as the chariot came up, some of the ringleaders, who seemed determined not to be baulked of their prey, caught the terrified Parson by the arms and commenced dragging him away, when Sir George turned suddenly round towards them, saying in a loud tone:

“Stop, my good people; I assure you, you are all labouring under a great mistake: I cannot imagine who can have hoaxed you in this shameful way, perhaps only to bring you into trouble. I give you my word of honour that this gentleman is no Popish priest or Jesuit, but one of your own clergy of the Church of England, whatever you may have been told to the contrary. I am Sir George Mannock, of Gifford’s Hall, in Suffolk, and I will vouch in

any way you please that my friend here is neither Priest nor Papist."

The ringleaders seemed quite confounded, and fell back at once, then taking off their hats and bowing low, muttered out:

"Much obliged, Sir George; very sorry, sir; we were really told so; hope you will excuse us, and look it over, if so be you are a magistrate" (which they evidently feared was the case). "We beg the gentleman's pardon, we do indeed." And as they slunk away the friends entered the chariot unmolested, and drove off enjoying a hearty laugh now the danger was over, with thanks for their providential escape, through Sir George's presence of mind and cool assurance of manner in thus readily availing himself of the situation of affairs, to save his friend and himself.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE DUTCHWOMAN.

**A** GOOD Priest with whom Mr. and Mrs. Sidney were intimately acquainted called on them one day some years after they had settled in London, and as he felt persuaded of her willingness to act in a charitable cause, he requested Mrs. Sidney to visit a poor young woman at an address he gave in some back lane.

She was a foreigner, he said, who with her infant was lodging with a poor Irishwoman known to him, and a member of his congregation. The poor creature was in a dreadful state of destitution, and could hardly speak a word of English. He believed her to be a married woman, though very young. She was in a most depressed state of mind, and refused to take any nourishment, and as her weakness was extreme,

it was clear that both she and her infant must soon perish, as she would not allow anyone to take the baby from her.

"Perhaps," added the good Priest, "Mrs. and Miss Sidney could bring her to a better state of mind, and induce her to preserve her life, even for the sake of her infant."

They readily promised to call and see her, and went out the same afternoon with that intention, accompanied by a servant with a basket of provisions.

On arriving at the place indicated, they enquired for Mrs. McGrath, and were conducted to a poor dwelling where, on entering, they found huddled up on the floor, a wretched looking young creature, with a sickly infant in her arms, supporting her head against an old chair, her eyes, which she never even raised at their entrance, were cast down towards the ground, her long fair hair hung loose over her shoulders, her dress, torn and ragged, appeared as if it had not been removed for weeks, the profoundest misery and want were depicted on her countenance, otherwise an interesting one, and her extremely youthful appearance rendering her an object of deep compassion. She would not respond to any questions, and was evidently smarting under



a sense of the degradation to which she seemed brought.

At last, after trying in vain to elicit the cause of her distress, Miss Sidney knelt down beside her and gently pushed back her hair, with a few encouraging words, upon which the young woman looked mournfully and inquiringly in her face, as if to see whether she was really friendly or whether she only addressed her, asking questions from curiosity. Finding that she understood French the young lady spoke to her in that language, which long practice with her dear French nuns at West Ham had rendered quite familiar, and the poor young woman replied less distrustfully, though shortly, to her inquiries.

But when Miss Sidney attempted quietly to take the baby from her to give it food, and induce her to take some herself, she clasped it convulsively to her bosom and shook her head, saying: "No, no, no."

They had elicited from her that she was a Hollander by birth, that she was married (shewing her ring), and had left her own family and come to England on the deck of a sailing vessel. What little money she had was spent; her husband had left her and enlisted as a sailor in the Dutch navy, and she was in a state of utter

destitution and starvation, unable to make herself understood by those about her, and she only desired to die with her infant; then looking at it sorrowfully she added: "Yes, we must both soon diè."

Of her parents, and why they had not befriended her, they could not get her to give any account; she evidently evaded all questions on that subject.

Mrs. Sidney and her daughter were deeply affected at the misery of this poor young creature, and the former asked Mrs. McGrath whether she had not been able to induce her to eat anything.

"Not a bit nor sup has passed her lips, my lady," replied she, "since she came to me the night before last, when I found her sitting outside my door and made her come inside, and there she has sat ever since: and that's why I went and tould his riverence about her. The crature is just murthering herself and that poor anotomy of a baby, which she won't let anyone touch, though I did take it away once to give it a drap of milk, but she screeched until she got it back again; and the life is almost out of it, as ye see, my lady, and a good thing if it died, says I, all the time I was feeding it."

"Hush!" said Mrs. Sidney; "the poor creature seems to understand you; see how she presses the baby to her heart," and they observed that she looked in a wild and frightened way at the old woman.

Again they placed before her some meat and bread, which she pushed aside, and some good beef tea being warmed, they tried to persuade her to swallow a little, but in vain.

On taking leave they promised to call again on the next day, telling her they hoped to find she had taken some food, if only for her infant's sake, as otherwise she would deprive her child of its life.

This was said in the kindest manner, but she only repeated that they *must* both die together.

Yet there was something in her manner which showed good breeding, even under all the disadvantages of her condition, and slipping half-a-crown into the hand of Mrs. McGrath, Mrs. Sidney promised the little gift should be repeated in the morning if she should succeed in inducing the poor young woman to take some food; "if you cannot," said she, "we must send for a doctor without delay, who will best suggest what is to be done."

"And sure, I'll do my best, my lady," replied Mrs. McGrath.

"I do not doubt," said Mrs. Sidney, "that if she can be persuaded to take some nourishment, she would allow the baby to be fed, or would feed it herself."

Mrs. McGrath then promised at their request not to attempt to take the baby from her by force, but to try and feed it in its mother's arms, and repeating:

"I'll engage, my lady, that I'll get her to ate what you so kindly provided for her, and my blessing go wid yez both;" she opened the door for the ladies to depart.

On the following morning Anastasia Sidney observed to her mother at breakfast time:

"Oh! mamma, I could not get that poor young woman out of my head last night, do let us go as soon as possible to see how she is getting on, and whether she has taken any food. How young she seems, and did you remark, mamma, that her hands, though so thin, were as white as yours?"

"Yes, indeed," replied her mother. "And her gestures and manner of speaking indicate that with all her present misery, she belongs to a superior class to that which she is now asso-

ciated with, though, of course, were it otherwise, she would be equally an object of charity."

They started soon afterwards on their benevolent errand, and knocking at Mrs. McGrath's door, inquired how the poor woman had passed the night.

"Ah! sure, my lady," she replied; "the faver came upon her about nine o'clock, and she did nothing but rave in a *furrin* talk, except when she looked at me, saying, 'Don't kill my baby,' for I found that she could say that much in English, and she's bad indeed, my lady, and I think she must see the docther, and maybe he could make her take what will hinder her from starving herself and her child."

Mrs. McGrath was a good-hearted woman but not a very judicious nurse, as will be seen.

"I fear she is past taking any food at present," said Mrs. Sidney approaching the bed on which the old woman had placed her. A hectic spot was on both her cheeks, her eyes glaring wildly while she tossed her arms about restlessly, not noticing any one until when Mrs. McGrath came close to her, she started with a cry of terror, clutching her infant to her breast in apparent agony.

"What does all this mean?" said Mrs. Sidney. "What can have caused this sudden change?"

"Then I'll just tell ye all about it, my lady," replied the old woman. "Indeed, I did as ye tould me, and niver tuk the baby from her at all at all, since ye were here yesterday, but just tried to coax her to ate some of the nice chicken and take a glass of the wine ye were so good as to send her last night; but not a bit nor sup would she taste of them, though I sot over her an hour an more talking to her. She only kept a tight hold of the baby, looking at me quite distrustful-like, fearing I should take it from her. At last I thought I'd be even with her, and try another way—so I just put the poker into the fire and made it red hot, then I held it up before her and made signs that I would put it down the baby's throat that minute if she didn't ate what you sent, and drink the beef tay at once, and that's the rale truth, though, of coorse, my lady, I wouldn't have harmed the poor little anotomy for the world, not I, indeed.

"But she screeched out murder directly, and began to ate up all before her and drank down the tay as if she would choke herself. 'That's

all right, now,' says I, then I offered her some wine, and she took a little, but that seemed all at once too much for her, so I let her alone and I was so glad I had got her to ate something as ye tould me, my lady, and I thought you and the young lady would be well plased."

The old woman was running on in this strain when Mrs. Sidney stopped her, saying :

"I fear, Mrs. McGrath, you have killed the poor creature."

"Well, my lady, I done all for the best," she replied ; "but the faver came over her, and she soon got as bad as ye see her now, and I carried her to my own bed, for she's as light as a wisp of straw and no more strength in her than that same. I then made her swallow some more wine to keep the life in her, but she got worse and worse every minute till she began to rave and look as wild as she does now."

"Oh ! mamma !" said Anastasia, "do let us take the poor creature home with us, and I would nurse and take care of the baby."

"She certainly has not much chance of recovery if she remains here," replied Mrs. Sidney, "however, I should like Doctor M—— to see her first, to decide whether she can be

safely removed and also whether there may be anything infectious in her present state."

Mrs. McGrath was then despatched with a few lines to the doctor who, as the distance was short, arrived soon afterwards. He pronounced the patient to be in a dangerous state, but considered that no signs of any contagious disorder were exhibited at that time, and thought that her removal might be attempted with care. She was therefore, with assistance, quietly conveyed to a coach, wrapped in blankets and supported with pillows, accompanied by Anastasia Sidney and Mrs. McGrath. Mrs. Sidney preceded them to announce and prepare for her arrival. The poor invalid had become quite unconscious, so they were able to take the infant from her arms, but after being washed and fed it was replaced by her side in a comfortable bed.

The doctor called again in the afternoon, and everything possible was done to restore the poor young woman to health, but in vain. The fever soon abated under skilful treatment, yet her weakness was too great to bear the reaction, and she gradually sank and expired in Miss Sidney's arms, about a fortnight after her removal from Mrs. McGrath's dwelling. While



she lived, a good French Priest attended her in a spiritual way daily, she having been baptized a Catholic, as they discovered, according to the religion of her mother, whom she lost at a very early age. Her father, however, being a Protestant, she had received but little instruction or encouragement to practise her religious duties, but showed a great desire of doing so, and received the last Sacraments with much devotion and with perfect resignation to die, leaving her child in such good hands, as she said, for Anastasia Sidney had promised to take every care of it. The poor little creature, however, only survived its mother a few weeks, and was buried in her grave.

In the meanwhile, a part of this poor young woman's history had transpired, Mr. Sidney's eldest son having made inquiries of a Dutch merchant, after they had discovered her name. He found out that she was well born and well educated, her family being one of consideration and wealth. She had married, without their consent, a person of inferior station, the son of a farmer on her father's estate, a thing rarely forgiven in any continental country and not always perhaps in England, but in Holland *never*, as the poor girl said herself, at least so she thought.

The Dutch gentleman, who interested himself in making inquiries about her and several others of his acquaintance, frequently called at Mr. Sidney's residence while she lived, and on hearing of her death they requested that her funeral should be of a most respectable kind, though strictly private, and performed entirely at their expense. Two of them followed her to the grave in a plain mourning coach with one of Mr. Sidney's sons and the good Priest who attended her on her death-bed. The writer has in her possession a silver tea-service which, with a salver, was presented to her mother by these Dutch gentlemen shortly afterwards, bearing the following inscription beneath each piece :

“In remembrance of the Humanity and Kindness bestowed on a distressed Dutch woman and her infant by Mr. Sidney's family, this token of respect is presented to Miss Anastasia Mary Mannock Sidney, by several friends, on the 15th May, 1805.”



## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE NUNS FROM CAMBRAI.

**S**HORTLY after Mr. and Mrs. Sidney had settled in London, whither they had removed, accompanied by Mr. Sidney's mother, from the house at Witham, where they had resided for so many years (having considered that the change would be to the advantage of their family), as their second son, William, then a very young man, was proceeding one morning on some business of enquiry to the London Docks, he saw standing on one of the landing-places, some women who appeared by their dress to be nuns,—the first he had ever seen.

He judged them to be a religious community, seeing an old gentleman with white locks standing by them who wore a costume similar to that of the emigrant Priests ~~he had~~ met with. They

seemed quite lost and bewildered, and showed signs of great fatigue and exhaustion; yet no one offered them any assistance, though they remained exposed to the gaze of the passers-by and the idle loungers about the place.

On inquiry, young William Sidney was told that they had not long landed on British ground from a fishing smack sailing from the coast of Holland; they had passed two days and three nights on a rough sea, having undergone great privations during their voyage, and not one of them could speak a word of English.

Feeling great compassion for the forlorn state of these poor ladies, the young man approached and accosted them in the best French he could muster, asking them whether he could do anything for them.

The Superior replied that they should feel very grateful to any one who could procure them a lodging, as they knew no one in England, or if they had any friends in London their address was unknown to them.

"They came," they said, "from Cambrai, being the remnant of a community of Augustinian nuns attached to the Hospital of St. John in that town. They had been only too glad to escape with their lives from France and Bel-

gium, having fled to the latter country. They had then made their way to Holland, where they found it impossible for them to remain. Rotterdam was already crowded with emigrants; they embarked therefore in the first vessel they could find bound for England, and now that they had landed in safety they did not know where to turn or what to do.

“You had better not remain here any longer, however,” said young Sidney, for a mob of people was gathering round them, laughing and jeering at their singular appearance. “You must greatly need repose after all you have suffered.” His first impulse being to conduct them to a Priest of his acquaintance, thinking he might procure for them a temporary shelter among some poor Catholics.

He ran and fetched two roomy hackney coaches, into which they all stowed themselves with their few packages, and as they entered the vehicles he heard remarks from the lookers-on, that it must be a Jew’s burial, as they all wore black cloaks with hoods over their religious habits. After informing them that he was a Catholic, which appeared to afford them great joy, with many blessings and thanks they confided themselves to the guidance of the young

man, who, seating himself on the box by one of the coachmen, determined to drive first to his father's residence. On arriving, he immediately ran up to his mother, explaining what had occurred, and the situation of these poor nuns, adding,

"Oh! mother, what can be done for them?"

"I really don't see what we *can* do, William," replied Mrs. Sidney, "unless we take them in ourselves. How many are they?"

"I think there are ten," replied her son, "besides the old Priest; pray let them stay here, mother, they have no friends that they know of, and I fear no persons who let lodgings would receive them, excepting, perhaps, some of our poorest Catholics, and then they could never make themselves understood. Perhaps by to-morrow or next day we could find some place for them, but they are quite exhausted now from fatigue and exposure, and almost starving, having only had a few biscuits and a little wine and water during their long voyage."

"Indeed," said his mother, "they are greatly to be pitied. I will just go and ask your father about it;" and she proceeded to Mr. Sidney's study, where, to his latest years, he always passed his mornings, and after obtaining

his consent, William and his elder brother, Marlow, assisted the nuns and the old Priest to alight, informing them that their parents would receive them as guests until suitable lodgings could be procured for them.

No words could express their gratitude for the charity shown towards them; and, while they partook of some refreshments, all the family began making arrangements for the repose these poor ladies so greatly needed. Rooms were found for the Priest and the Superior with one of her sisters. There were eight more to provide for, and Mrs. Sidney proposed to have mattresses laid on the drawing-room floor, that being the largest room, each member of the family giving up one from their respective beds. Additional pillows and blankets were lent by some kind neighbours, chiefly by a Jewish family, one of the Goldsmids of that period, who resided next door to the Sidneys.

On the following day the nuns related the many narrow escapes they had had both in France and Belgium. Several of the sisters had been imprisoned at Cambrai, and one of the emigrants, Sister Placide, had hourly expected to be guillotined. She was the procuratrix and general manager of the temporalities of the

Hospice under their care, and being replaced by a secular director appointed by the Republic, this man, who understood nothing of the necessary details, asked to have Sister Placide released for a few days that he might learn from her his business. She was therefore permitted to leave the prison, and during the night means were found to procure her escape with another of the sisters.

At great risk they succeeded in avoiding an armed mob, and reached the house of the parents of one of the community, at a place not far distant. Many of the elder nuns died either in prison or from the privations they suffered; and the remainder made their way to a convent of their Order at Lessines, in Belgium. There they lost two more of their sisters, the place being unhealthy. Others were unable to proceed, and had to conceal themselves when the Republican army arrived in that locality. The remaining ten were forced to fly to Holland to save their lives, leaving behind them one of their most esteemed companions, Sister Bernardine, in a very dangerous state. She had been their Prioress; and they heard afterwards that being obliged to leave the convent with the rest of the community located there, she underwent the



greatest trials, with extreme hardships and privations, in her endeavours to conceal herself from her persecutors, being one whose life they considered forfeited.

The present remnant of the community expressed themselves most thankful to Divine Providence, which had conducted them safely to England after all they had endured, and friendless and destitute as they were, had brought them in contact with such kind friends.

Search was made without delay for a suitable abode for them. They were found, however, to be so gentle and quiet, so easily satisfied, and so deeply grateful for any service rendered to them, that they were retained by Mr. and Mrs. Sidney at their residence for more than a fortnight. At last a small house was taken, and furniture of a simple kind provided for them by their benefactors (as they always called the Sidney family), to which some other Catholics also contributed.

They were very desirous to support themselves in any way in their power if work could be found for them.

It happened at that time that there was a perfect rage for tambour-embroidery, of which, however, they knew nothing. It was used in

all descriptions of ladies' dress, from under-clothing to the finest muslin dresses, veils, collars, ruffles, &c., all were ornamented with tambour-work, both in silk and thread. One of the best tambour-embroidery establishments was kept by some Catholics of German extraction, who employed a large number of hands at the business. Mrs. Sidney induced the proprietors to give lessons to the nuns on moderate terms.

With the assistance of their friends they adopted plain black secular dresses, and applied themselves to learn the work, making such good use of their time as to receive very soon afterwards piecework to accomplish at their own residence. Their skill and punctuality in a short time procured them as much work as they could perform, both from their Catholic employers and others.

At first their daily wants were supplied by Mr. Sidney's family, who visited them frequently, and gave them all necessary aid in their little household matters until they were able to provide for themselves, observing as much of their rule as was consistent with their occupation.

After some months had elapsed, during which time the good Abbé who accompanied them to

England remained at Mr. Sidney's residence, the nuns established themselves, with the assistance of their friends, in a commodious house at West Ham, in Essex, within a moderate distance from Stratford, where was situated the tambour establishment that principally gave them employment.

They had now such constant work that they were able to relieve each other in turn, half of their number only working at a time (excepting at certain busy periods), in a good work-room fitted for the purpose. They were considered among the most skilled hands, and the remuneration they received amply sufficed for their moderate requirements.

The good old Abbé who accompanied them to England resided in the house, acting as their Chaplain, their first care being to fit up the best room as a chapel, to which all their friends contributed. They had a good garden well stocked with vegetables and fruit trees.

Some Quaker families residing in the neighbourhood showed them especial kindness, and gave them many proofs of their benevolent sympathy. One of them supplied them with a pony and vehicle in which they could send their work to and fro. Another family, who kept

two cows, furnished them with milk gratis ; in fine, they were universally respected by all, so that, having acquired a little English, they became as happily circumstanced as their exile would permit ; two English sisters having joined the community. They were always very merry and light-hearted, and they continued to reside at West Ham during the eight remaining years they spent in England.

The Sidney family paid them frequent visits ; and many happy days in her childhood did the writer's mother pass with these good nuns. To be allowed to visit them was always held out as a reward for application to lessons, and "*la chère petite Anastasie*," as they called her, who was about eight years of age when they came to this country, was always a most welcome guest.



## CHAPTER XV.

### THE NUNS FROM CAMBRAI.

**I**N 1802 it was made known to the nuns at West Ham that Napoleon was desirous of restoring in France some of the Institutions of Charity. He was of opinion that those devoted sisters in particular who belonged to such communities could best attend to his sick and wounded soldiers. Consequently they resolved to return to their native country, as they wished to comply with the rules of their institute, and to settle once more, if possible, in their own convent, attached to the Hospital of St. John, at Cambrai.

They therefore took leave of their English friends with tears of affection and gratitude on their part, and heartfelt regret on both sides; everything was done to facilitate their journey, but when they arrived at their destination they found that the revenues of the Hospital had been

nearly all dissipated by the Republic, and what remained had been made over to another establishment. The Hospice itself had become untenable, and required extensive repairs and an entirely renewed organisation, of which the local administration declined to undertake the cost.

Finally, after some correspondence with the Bishops with whom Napoleon was in treaty for the restoration of religion, it was arranged that this community should take charge of the Hospice de Ville, at Boulogne, to which, after some delay, they removed, and were installed in the adjoining buildings, a convent, occupied before the Revolution by sisters of St. Vincent de Paul, of whom a great number had laid down their lives on the scaffold, martyrs of charity, and victims of their devoted zeal in its cause. It was an arduous undertaking for the Cambrai nuns, as the Hospital was in a wretched state of destitution and need of all necessary appliances for the poor inmates who were crowded into it, regardless of age or sex.

The nuns set to work to restore order, and with the help of the municipality and some charitably disposed persons, the Hospice soon assumed a new aspect. It was founded in 1249, and is very extensive, having a rather

handsome church and two large gardens within its precincts.

The good old Priest who accompanied the nuns to England had gone to his rest in exile, much regretted ; another emigrant Priest had supplied his place, and was afterwards appointed Chaplain at the Hospice at Boulogne.

The greatest respect was shown to the small community on its arrival, and every assistance afforded to them. The number of sick and wounded soldiers alone amounted at one time to eleven hundred, additional accommodation having to be found in the former seminary, very near the Hospice.

Their dear Sister Bernardine, whom the nuns had left in Belgium, joined them soon after they were settled in their new abode, and was re-elected Superior.

Some years later, after the fall of Napoleon, and the entrance into France of the allied armies, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney, and their daughter Anastatia, then married, paid a visit to their old friends at the Hospice, at Boulogne. They intended to proceed to Belgium, where Mr. Sidney's eldest daughter, with the community she had entered at Hengrave Hall, in England, had established themselves at Bruges, in the

same convent that those religious had been forced to quit at the Revolution.

On arriving at the gates of the Hospice, they found them closed for the night, excepting for urgent cases. The porter, who appeared at the sound of the bell, demurred at admitting them.

"An English gentleman (*un mitor Anglais*) and two ladies with him, want to see Dame Prieure," said the coachman.

"It is impossible, monsieur," replied the porter; "we can admit no one at this hour. The gates are closed at seven, and it is now half-past."

They alighted, however, saying they would retire at once if, on seeing the portress of the convent, at an inner door, they should be refused admittance, as they desired to pursue their journey the next morning.

After some hesitation, the sentry or guard, showing also a disposition to bar their entrance, the porter consented to allow them to pass, assuring them, however, that they would have to return to their carriage, as visitors were never permitted to break the rules.

He then conducted them through the courtyard, and on ringing a bell, a well-remembered face appeared at a small grating.



"Dear Sœur Thérèse," said Mrs. Sidney, "do you not know us? Though it is rather late, we have called this fine evening in hopes of seeing you and your sisters for a few minutes, at least, before proceeding to our hotel."

"Can it be our dear benefactors," replied Sœur Thérèse. "Oh, what a joy! what a surprise!" and she ran to announce their arrival to her Superior, saying,

"Come quick, dear mother, here are our beloved friends from England, Monsieur and Madame Sidney, and a young lady, who must, I think, be *la petite Anastasie*."

Dame Prieure soon appeared, and such a greeting as followed was past all description. They nearly carried off her feet "*la petite Anastasie*," 'as they would still call her, although they knew she was married and had then two children. They were all conducted at once into the convent; a merry peal of joy from the bell actually being sounded after the Angelus.

"We only thought to see you for a moment this evening," said Mr. Sidney; "we can return in the morning for a longer visit before we proceed on our journey."

"Oh! we cannot allow you to leave us; you did not send our sisters to an hotel when they

arrived friendless in your country; we can never forget our benefactors," exclaimed Dame Prieure.

"We have a nice large room vacant at present, occasionally occupied by superior patients, and if you, Monsieur and Madame, could think it good enough, it would give us all such pleasure to see you occupy it; and there is a smaller one close to it for *la chere petite*," added one of the sisters.

"Oh! pray do oblige us," they all said.

So fearing they would be really hurt by a refusal, the party availed themselves of the hospitality of the good nuns. Their luggage was, therefore, brought in and the coach dismissed.

Supper was served to them in Dame Prieure's room, and in the meanwhile, every possible preparation was made for their accommodation. They all seemed to contend which should do the most towards making their guests comfortable; one proposing one thing, another something else, though they were assured that nothing more was required. Mrs. Sidney discovered that they had actually sent at that hour (about eight o'clock) into the town for the loan of a carpet to spread over Mr. and

Mrs. Sidney's room, where two clean and commodious French beds were arranged. A couple of looking-glasses, and a few other articles were procured at the same time; the townspeople being always glad to oblige them, so greatly were they respected and beloved by all who knew them.

The next morning, after breakfast, Dame Prieure, with another Sister, accompanied their guests over the wards of the hospital. They stopped at the bedsides of some of the soldiers, many of whom were disabled from old wounds; others, the survivors of the Russian campaign, were still suffering intensely from frost bites and the amputation of their limbs. Most of them appeared miserably weak and dejected from the pain they had endured, and all the hardships they had undergone. Mr. Sidney's daughter observed to one of them,

"Are you not glad we now have peace? You must be rejoiced to hear that Buonaparte, who had drawn you all from your homes and families, is safe out of the way at last?"

"*Madame,*" replied a mere boy of a soldier, who had lost both his feet, "*de qui parlez vous? de notre Empereur?*"

"What!" said the lady, "do you still call him so?"

"Certainly," he replied, "we would all willingly die for him," and at the top of his feeble voice, he suddenly shouted out, "*Vive l'Empereur!*"

All the rest in the ward, which was exclusively for soldiers, joined at once in the same cry, and the effect became almost deafening, as those in the adjoining wards united with their comrades in the same hearty demonstration. It was even taken up by the soldiers occupying a higher story, and "*Vive l'Empereur*" resounded through the whole building with wonderful energy by all who were capable of making themselves heard. The poor nuns ran away, stopping their ears, and saying, "*Oh mechans! mechans enfans!* stop your cries; this cannot be allowed." At last the noise subsided, and quiet being restored, the good Sisters proceeded with their guests to the other departments of the hospice, and visited the sick wards and those devoted to children. Such as were appropriated to contagious diseases occupied a separate building. They were then conducted over the orphanage, which was also within the precincts of the Hospice, and admired the affec-

tion displayed by those little ones for their kind guardians. The greatest order and regularity prevailed everywhere, with the most scrupulous cleanliness and attention to the comfort of the poor inmates as far as was in the power of the devoted Sisters who tended them.

Mr. and Mrs. Sidney and their daughter spent two days longer at the Hospice, at the earnest entreaty of their friends, the nuns, and then took their leave; much pleased at having seen them again, and with the hospitality and kindness they had received. They were warmly invited to repeat their visit; and any of the family who may have chanced to be at Boulogne since then, have ever been heartily welcomed by these good Sisters, as the writer herself has experienced.

The last of the emigrants, Sœur Louise, died in 1875, at a very advanced age.

THE END.









